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Portland Terrace by T. E. Owen, 1846
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THE HOUSES AND INHABITANTS OF THOMAS ELLIS OWEN'S SOUTHSEA

R. C. Riley, BSc(Econ), PhD

No other Victorian architect excites so much attention in Southsea as Thomas Ellis Owen (1804–62) whom so many contemporary topographers justifiably described as the progenitor of Portsmouth's middle class satellite. Southsea may have lacked the architectural panache of Brighton and certainly of Bath, but it did possess its own distinctive character by mid-century and this owed much to Owen's idiosyncratic approach to development. His houses are now much sought after as society has come to appreciate the legacy of the early Victorians and an essential component of the trend has been a thirst for information about the man and his houses. The most fundamental piece of research, by two architects Preedy and Stewart, appeared in 1972 and provided a background to his life, but very much more thoroughly, identified and described his houses.[1] Other work has emphasised the architectural aspects of Owen's affairs, understandably, since it has almost entirely been undertaken by architects,[2] and little has been added to our knowledge of the man since Preedy and Stewart wrote. This lacuna persists for this paper is less concerned with Owen himself than with the identification and dating of his houses and with the people who lived in them and in those in the vicinity in his lifetime. It is sufficient for present purposes merely to state that Owen studied in London, was heavily influenced by Italian architectural styles, worked for the government on the purchase of land and property and collaborated with his father Jacob, clerk of works and later chief surveyor to the Royal Engineers in Portsmouth, on a number of local churches. He had a long career in local politics, was Mayor in 1847 and 1862, and espoused a number of causes such as railways and public water supply, quite apart from his work as builder, surveyor, civil engineer and landlord on a considerable scale. The complete biography of this interesting man remains an inviting prospect.

The dating of houses in Owen's Southsea

By the very nature of his profession the architect leaves especially tangible evidence of his work for others to criticise and admire, but when there are scant records the attribution of buildings is not always easy. It is then necessary to rely upon architectural characteristics, the layout of drives, gardens and indeed of the roads themselves, and upon the relationship of one house to another. This was the method principally employed by Preedy and Stewart and it in no way detracts from the value of their work to admit that Owen's houses, dismissed by Pevsner and Lloyd as 'strange and awkward',[3] were certainly architecturally distinctive. They were never built in sterile rows, rather placed at a variety of angles to each other and to the road that served them, they possessed great variations in size and shape and not least they were integrated into a road system which used curves to great effect, providing a hint of the unexpected, and in some senses of a bucolic environment by the substantial use of trees and lanes. The tortuous narrowness of The Thicket, Ormsby Road, The Vale, Serpentine Road and the entrances to Sussex Terrace and Merton Road are pure Owen. The same was once true of The Circle but the effect has been softened by the driving of Clarendon Road through the central island the road once enclosed. At a larger scale the gentle curves of Grove Road South, Queen's Crescent, Merton Road and Nelson Road are sufficiently idiosyncratic to be associated with Owen, and it may be that Preedy and Stewart were alerted to the possibility of his having built properties at the eastern end of Clarendon Road by the semi-circle that is Eastern Villas Road.

While buildings by distinctive architects may be identified with some degree of certainty, the problem of dating is not readily overcome. For this reason it is with some hesitation that one questions the rationale behind the allocation by Preedy and Stewart of Owen's houses to the time periods 1835–7, 1838–51 and 1851–60. The choice of 1837–38 as the divide between his early and middle period almost certainly springs from the publication of the tithe map, *Map of the Parish of Portsea,*[4] surveyed by Owen himself, in 1838; 1851 was a census year and large houses were often named in the enumerators' returns, allowing generalisations about the date of their construction, but why 1860 rather than 1861, the next census year, or 1862 when Owen died, was chosen is a little difficult to fathom. These considerations prompted the thought that the rate returns could be employed as a precise method of dating properties, and at the same time information as to ownership would become available. It had already been observed during an earlier study[5] that Owen was a substantial property owner and there seemed good grounds for believing that rather than sell his houses he retained them as an investment. Were this the case, perusal of the rate books might solve both the problem of dating and of identification.

The dating of terraces, as opposed to detached and semi-detached houses, raises no difficulty since they are individually named in the rate books and it is a simple matter to trace their first appearance. Indeed, since the rates were collected every quarter it is possible to be exceptionally accurate as to the date of completion of properties. Thus Table 1, which is based on rate returns, clearly indicates that Queen's Terrace was put up in three stages: between June and September 1837, October 1838 and January 1839 and July and October 1840. It is sometimes argued that no entry appears in the rate books until a

property is inhabited because rates are not paid on empty houses, and that rating lists are therefore not an entirely accurate source for dating purposes. This is quite fallacious for unoccupied buildings are always listed, the owner is indicated and the column for the occupier is merely left blank. Further, a rateable value is assigned, although the rate is not collected, and an identical sum is entered under the columns 'Amount not Recoverable or Legally Excused' and 'Total Amount to be Collected'. There is no question, then, as to the utility of the rate books for the dating of properties, provided, of course, that the entries can be related to particular buildings.

Table 1

Stages in the construction of Queen's Terrace 1837–40

Date	Number of houses completed
June 1837	None
September 1837	8
May 1838	8
July 1838	8
October 1838	8
January 1839	10
April 1839	10
July 1839	10
October 1839	10
January 1840	10
April 1840	10
July 1840	10
October 1840	13

Source: *Rate Returns* for the dates shown

The identification and therefore dating of villas, as Victorians were wont to call them, is a more difficult but not insuperable problem. Fortunately for this research, the great majority of those who could afford to live in large houses appeared in the trade directories that were published in increasing numbers at mid-century. These names and addresses can be related to the rate book entries, and by working backwards through the rate books until the entry fails to appear, the date of construction may be established. The tracing process is facilitated by the provision of owner, occupier and rateable value in the lists. This method, however, depends very much on the comprehensiveness of the directories' coverage and unidentifiable properties are bound to occur. The solution is to transfer all the available information on to the large scale Ordnance Survey map, published in 1867, which shows the names of the villas, and to plot the rate collector's walk, thus permitting the assignment of entries in the rate book which do not appear in the directories to houses on the ground. For instance, the October 1851 rate book entry for Grove Road begins: Edward Lang, William Payne, Hugh Evans. The directories indicate that Lt. Lang RN lived at Grove Lodge East and Major Evans at Cambrian Cottage, but they are silent on William Payne. Since the rate collector was walking south along Grove Road and there is an intervening house, Grove Villa, between Grove Lodge East and Cambrian Cottage, it is reasonable to assume that it was occupied by William Payne. As a check on the accuracy of the method, the census enumerator's walk may be plotted on the same map and if the correct assumptions have been made, the two walks should mesh together. This exercise has been carried out for Grove Road in 1851 and is reported in detail elsewhere;[6] it confirms William Payne as the tenant of Grove Villa.

Bearing in mind the level of accuracy deriving from the rate books it is inevitable that there should be discrepancies between the present findings and those of Preedy and Stewart. Netley Terrace, for instance, placed in the 1838–51 period by the latter authors, was completed in stages between 1859 and 1860. Richmond Terrace was finished in 1860 rather than between 1838 and 1851, and Clifton Terrace dates from 1856, not *c.* 1845. Sussex Terrace, specifically identified with the years 1837–38 by Preedy and Stewart, was not in fact finished until 1854–55. Because of the considerable variation in the two sets of dates for Sussex Terrace, a change of street name seemed a possibility and a search of the rate books was made to ascertain whether any of the tenants of the terrace had been previously listed under neighbouring streets, such as Sussex Road, Queen's Place or Queen's Crescent. However, there was no indication that this was the case and further, the terrace appeared in neither the 1841 nor the 1851 census enumerator's returns. Perhaps the earlier date may have sprung from a deed of conveyance which, although representing a change of land ownership, does not necessarily imply the existence of a house. A number of houses in Grove Road and Kent Road are dated by Preedy and Stewart rather earlier than the rate books suggest. One would not take serious issue over these dates, but they do raise a matter of interest to students of Portsmouth's history. The authors in question suggest that the properties were completed between 1835 and 1837, yet the rate books indicate that many were completed as late as 1845. With the exception of Sussex Terrace, all the houses under discussion appear on the 1838 tithe map, and it seems very likely that Preedy and Stewart used their presence on this map to date them. The explanation of the discrepancy between the two sources is that the tithe map is correct not to 1838, but rather to 1845. At the back of the

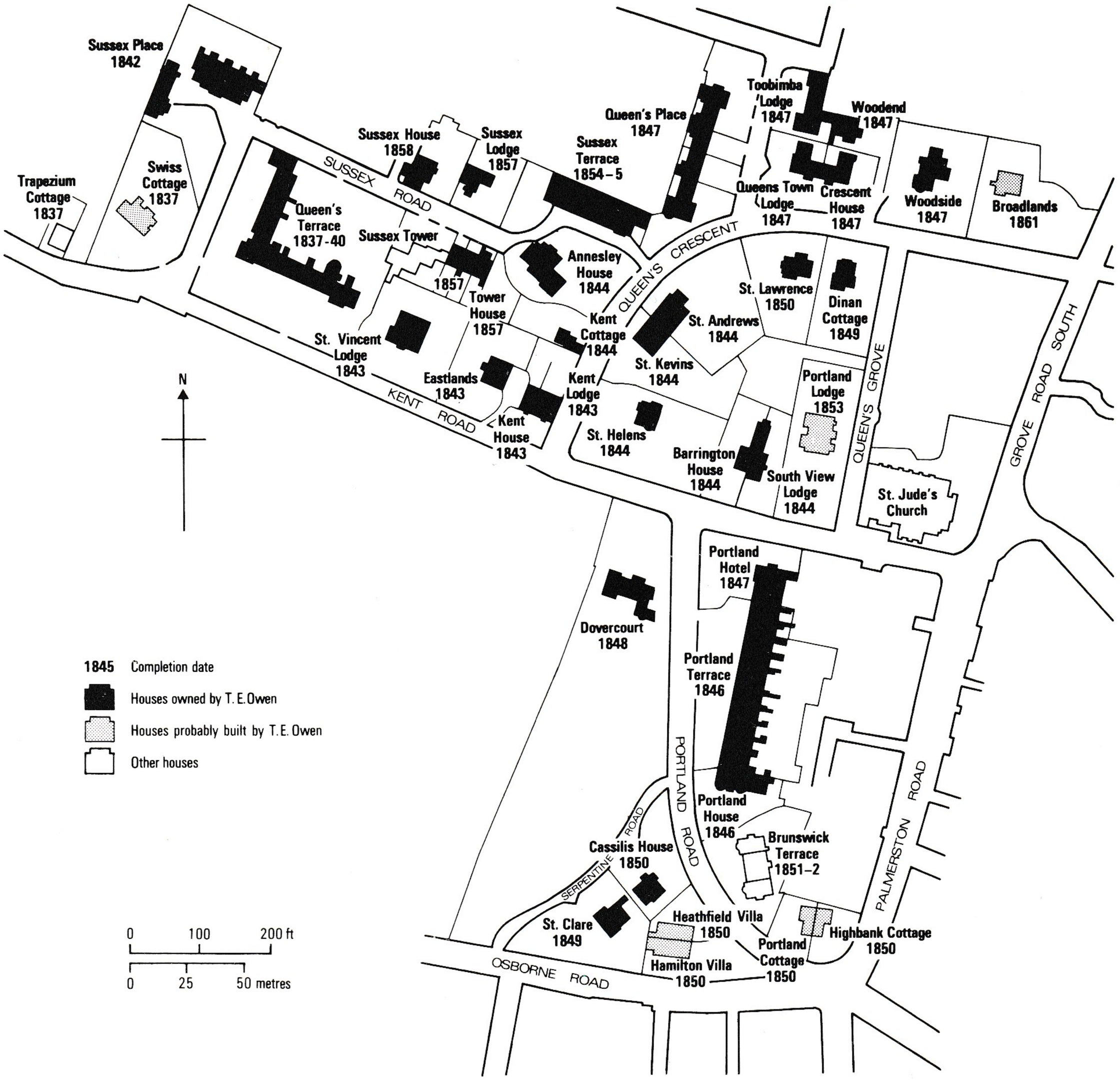


Fig. 1 Owen's Southsea: The Kent Road area

schedule to the map the earliest entry gives the date of the first apportionment as 13 February 1845, indicating that although the original survey might have been undertaken in 1838, the map was updated to 1845 to provide a correct record at the time of the first apportionment. Doubtless the publication date of the tithe map has many times been accepted in the past and it is interesting that work on houses built by the author of the map should have fortuitously brought the error to light.

The dates of houses in that part of Southsea considered by Preedy and Stewart to contain work by Owen are mapped in Figures 1 to 6. The area has Grove Road as its spine with Kent, Clarendon and Villiers Roads as the most important ribs. Tenuously connected to the main body by Clarendon Road is the Eastern Villas Road outlier, together with the tiny cluster of houses at the junction of Clarendon and Florence Roads not recognised by Preedy and Stewart. For reasons which will subsequently become apparent, Clifton, Netley and Richmond Terraces are excluded from the maps, but their dates appear in the text above. In general terms the chronological sequence of completion is: Kent Road, Grove Road, Queen's Crescent and Portland Road built in the 1840s, Clarendon Road, Villiers Road, Eastern Villas Road, Yarborough and Pelham Roads completed in the following decade, and finally in the early 1860s Albany Road, Nelson Road, Merton Road and Eastern Parade. This must be regarded as but a broad guide, for Owen was by no means a spatially ordered builder, any more than were his houses architecturally identical, and he would leave plots of land vacant long after the completion of proximate houses. Grove Road represents the extreme case; St. John's was completed 16 years after the adjacent Cambrian Cottage while there are 15 years between St. Catherine's and Oaklands.

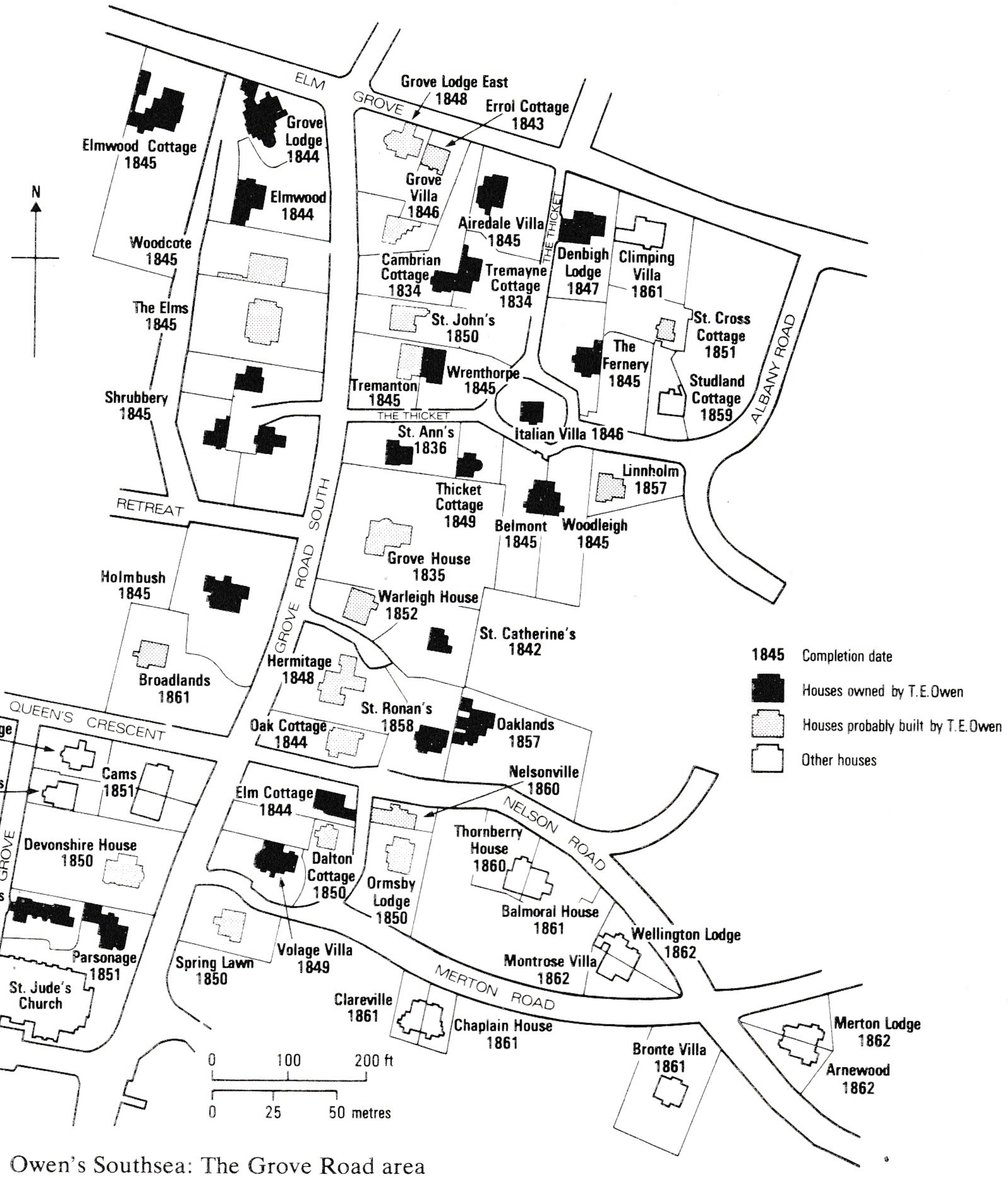


Fig. 2 Owen's Southsea: The Grove Road area

The identification of Owen's Houses

However much building dates may be of historical significance, there can be little doubt that contemporary public interest is more concerned with the question of attribution of houses to Owen. The subject is fraught with difficulty, but once again the rate books, in combination with architectural and documentary evidence, may be used to provide a sound basis for study.[7] Owen's policy of retaining the ownership of houses he built is especially helpful, for the rate books furnish information on ownership and it is reasonable to assume that properties controlled by Owen were constructed by him. Confirmation of the authenticity of the rate books in respect of ownership is provided for a random selection of 14 houses, described in publicity leaflets as belonging to Owen when they came up for auction in August 1860 through the auspices of Messrs. Marvin and King and Owen's solicitor, G. C. Stigant. The houses included Kent House, Kent Lodge, St. Catherine's, Holmbush, Lennox Cottage, Airedale Villa, Denbigh Lodge and St. Vincent Lodge; the description of the latter is worth repeating.

> Lot 1. St. Vincent Lodge. The capital MANSION, with its ornamental grounds, coach-house and stabling, called St. Vincent Lodge, situate in Kent Road, commanding extensive views of the sea, the Isle of Wight and Spithead, in the occupation of Lord George Lennox, having a frontage of 132′, and a depth of 140′ or thereabouts.[8]

On the evidence of ownership indicated by the rate books it is possible to identify some 75 villas and 54 terraced houses as his work. It is somewhat surprising to find that terraced houses were so numerous, but the bulk are accounted for by three groups, Queen's (13), Portland (11) and Eastern Parade (9); the remainder were distributed between Queen's Place (6), Sussex Terrace (6), Sus-

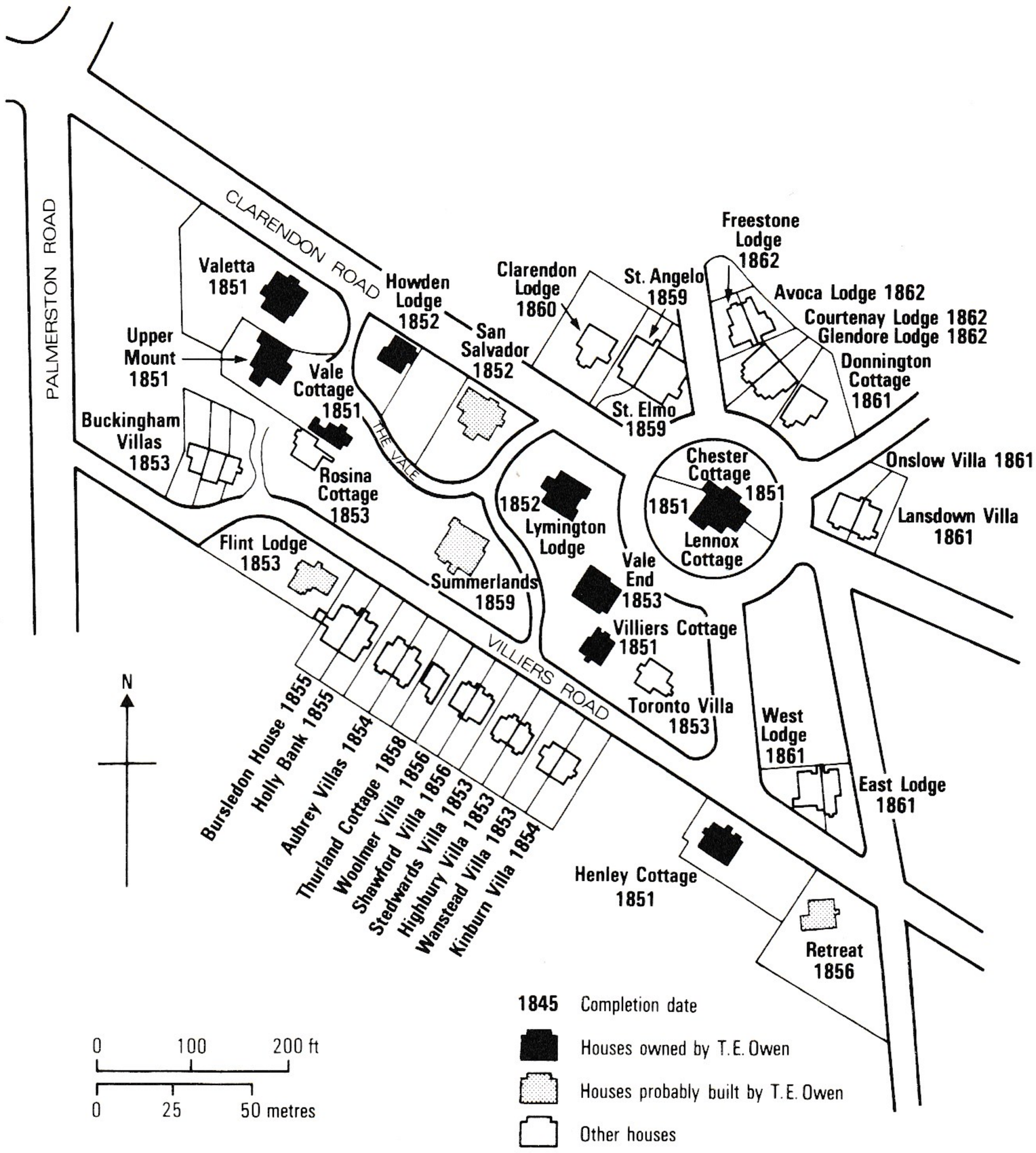


Fig. 3 Owen's Southsea: The Clarendon Road area

sex Place (6) and St. Jude's Close (3). What is even more surprising is that virtually all those houses attributed to Owen by the present writer are similarly classified by Preedy and Stewart, despite the quite different source material, the one documentary, the other architectural. One is tempted to say that there is entire unanimity since the differences largely concern houses such as Woodbank Cottage, Rosebank Cottage and two of the four Florence Cottages, long since demolished, and as such impossible to attribute by visual means. The two southerly Florence Cottages that survive have been considerably modified and are located in isolation from other Owen houses, but sufficient characteristic features remain to allow recognition.

It would be naive to argue that Owen as a successful architect did not design and build houses for clients or for speculative sale. Here the rate books offer less assistance, although in some cases ownership by Owen of one of a pair of semi-detached houses may be regarded as evidence of construction of both. A case in point is Wrenthorpe and Tremanton in Grove Road. In order to isolate the great majority of houses probably by Owen, reliance must be placed on a variety of evidence, the most important of which is architectural, with some support from what is known of land ownership. Thus the schedule to the tithe map referred to earlier shows Owen as owning a number of plots of land in the Grove Road area in which houses bearing his design touch were later constructed, but were never owned by him. This is the rationale behind the assignment of a substantial number of Grove Road properties to the 'probably by Owen' category in Figure 2. Five of these houses were finished in 1850, a year in which Owen seems to have sold off many more houses than he retained, possibly following cash flow problems deriving from his very heavy financial commitments of 1846–47. It may be noted from Figure 2 that Cams is excluded from the Owen stable – on architectural grounds. The same combination of architectural and land tenure evidence provides the justification for assuming that Owen built Portland Lodge and those houses at the southern tip of the old Portland Road, where Debenhams' shop now stands. Architectural evidence alone is used to include six houses within the Owen fold: San Salvador, Summerlands, Flint Lodge, Furness Lodge, Shanklin Lodge and Swiss Cottage. Some 31 villas, all of which appear on Preedy and Stewart's listing, are thereby added to those derived from rate book evidence, giving a total of 106 villas and 54 terraced houses which may be ascribed with reasonable confidence to Owen. Their location may be seen in Figures 1 to 6.

Thus far the discrepancy between Preedy and Stewart and the present research is negligible, but in a number of instances the rate books allow a rebuttal of association with Owen on the grounds that the initial owners were

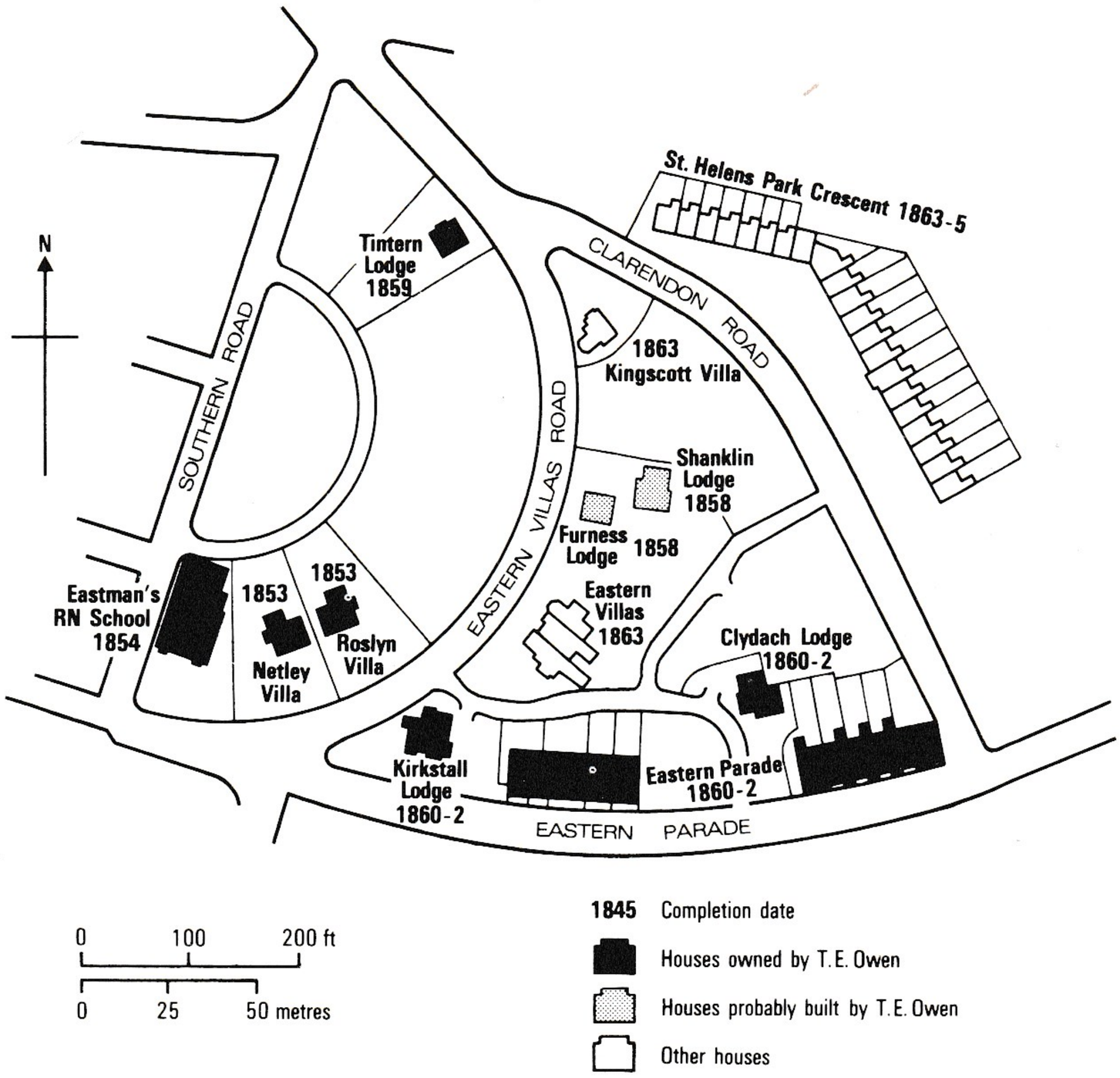
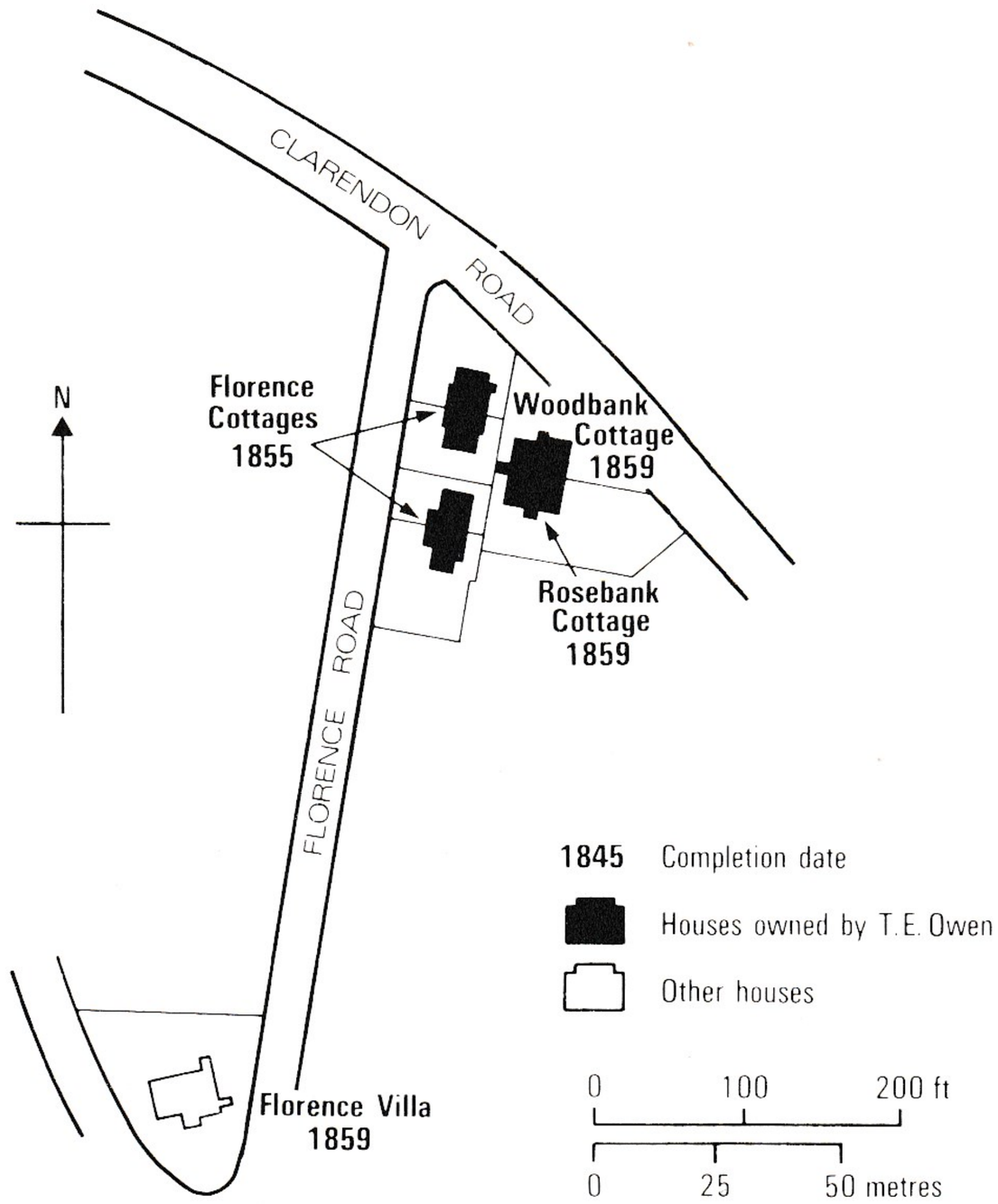


Fig. 4 Owen's Southsea: The Eastern Villas Road area

Fig. 5 Owen's Southsea: The Florence Road area



other architects and builders who are unlikely to have used Owen's designs, although there would have been nothing to prevent extensive imitation of a successful style. The impressive Clifton Terrace appears under the ownership of Henry Francis Gauntlett, an architect, surveyor, builder, timber and coal merchant and auctioneer with premises at 417 Commercial Road, a sand pit and brickworks at Stamshaw and a sawmill rated at £35, containing a steam engine at Britannia Wharf, Mile End.[9] It is inconceivable that such a person would have relied upon Owen in any way and Clifton Terrace must be disassociated from him. Gauntlett is shown in 1859 as part owner of Netley Terrace with Isaac Moody, a timber merchant, and although by the time the terrace was completed in the following year Gauntlett had sold off his interest, there are grounds for suspecting that he was involved in the construction of the property. A third terrace often attributed to Owen, Richmond, was entirely owned by Gauntlett, and like Netley, seems to lack the graceful and imposing nature of Owen's work. A fourth, Brunswick Terrace, to the south of Portland Terrace in Portland Road, now vanished beneath Debenhams, was owned by another builder, John Aylen, while St. Helens Park Crescent, at the eastern end of Clarendon Road, belonged to Charles Braxton, a builder, although since it was constructed between 1863 and 1865, it fell outside the life span of Owen in any case.

The rate books are equally helpful in respect of a number of villas in roads peripheral to what may be

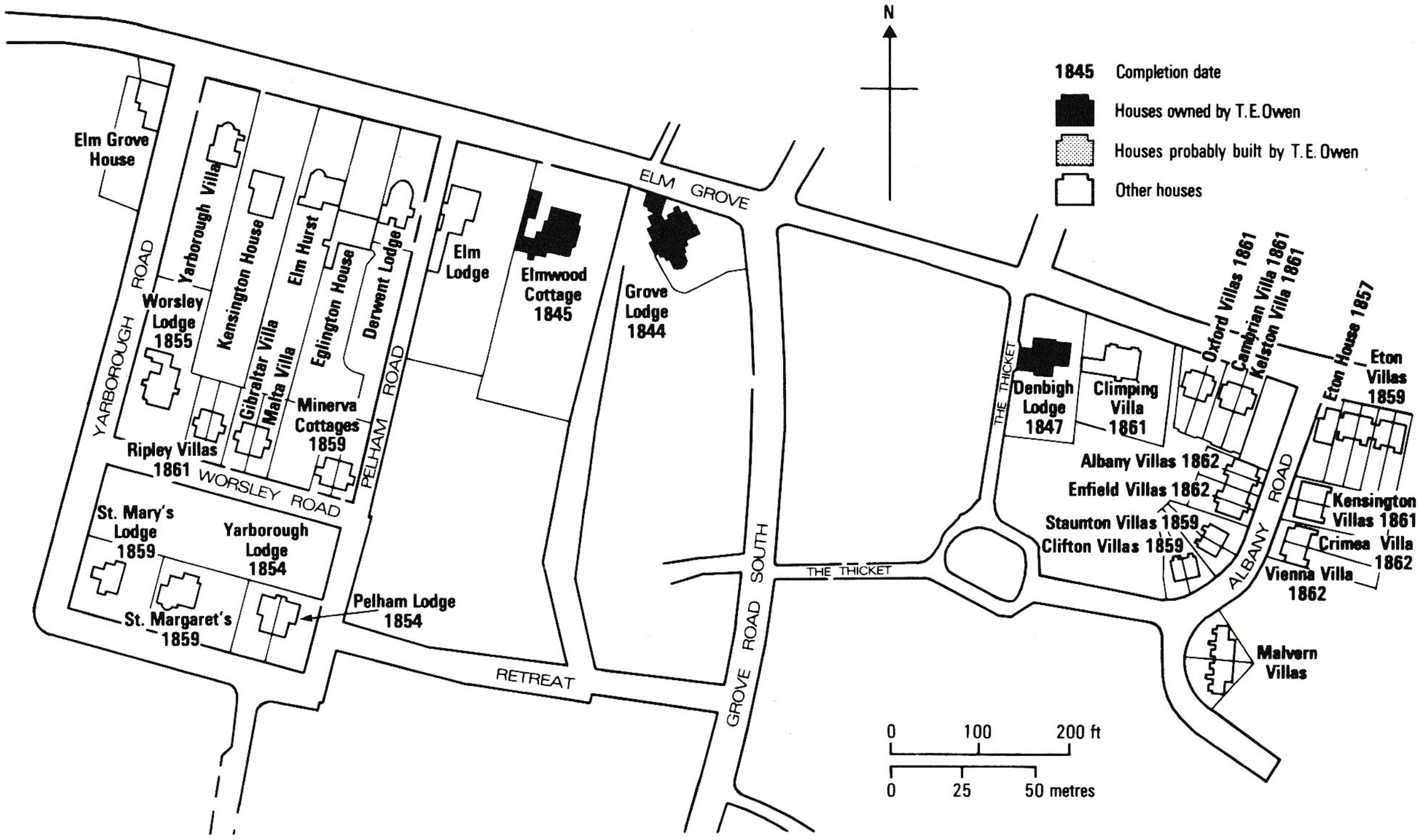


Fig. 6 Owen's Southsea: The Elm Grove area

regarded as undoubted Owen territory. The seven houses between Thurland Cottage and Kinburn Villa on the south side of Villiers Road were all owned by Thomas Backhurst, a builder with premises in Church Street, Landport. Two more, Aubrey Villas, were the property of Isaac Moody, although they may still have been put up by Owen. Toronto Villa, Rosina Cottage and Buckingham Villas on the north side of Villiers Road, were owned by William Davis, yet another builder. Two additional factors may be advanced to support the contention that Owen was not involved on the southern side of Villiers Road. Firstly, the houses stand in a quite uncharacteristic regimented line at identical distances from, and their fronts parallel to the linear road; a comparison with maps of accredited Owen properties in Clarendon Road and Grove Road makes the point clearer. Secondly, Owen did not favour semi-detached houses – only three pair were included in the 106 villas considered to be his work – yet six of the seven Backhurst houses are semi-detached, as are the two that belonged to Moody.

The intertwined paths of Merton and Nelson Roads give the undoubted impression of Owen, and of course he was responsible for houses at their western end, but the rate books suggest that other properties put up before his death were not by him. Henry Gauntlett owned Thornberry House and Balmoral in Nelson Road. Yet another builder, Thomas Quick of Cross Street, Portsea, had the ownership of Clareville and Chaplain House. The same gentleman owned Arnewood and was therefore likely to have built Merton Lodge with which it is paired; since the latter two are identical to Wellington Lodge and Montrose Villa, it is reasonable to suppose that Quick was responsible for these too. Similarly Hillsborough Villas match the semi-detached pair Clareville and Chaplain House and may thus not unreasonably be attributed to Quick. Only Bronte Villa remains unaccounted for, and since it has been demolished recourse to architectural evidence is impossible. However, that Hillsborough Villas, Merton Lodge and Montrose Villa were all owned by William Peter Vosper Wallis, a solicitor, notary and Commissioner of the Admiralty Court of 10 High Street, Portsmouth, suggests that Quick and he were involved in some kind of collaborative venture. This was relatively common between small builders lacking capital and wealthier men, especially solicitors.[10] Wallis owned Bronte Villa and if the foregoing hypothesis is correct, then Quick may have been the builder. Two other houses fall into the category of having been owned by a builder other than Owen: Wilton Lodge in Queen's Crescent and St. Briavel's in Queen's Grove. In both cases the builder concerned was Luke Camwell, and it must be said that St. Briavel's in particular is hardly redolent of Owen's touch.

There are three further areas in which Preedy and Stewart suggest an association with Owen: Pelham and Yarborough Roads, Albany Road and the north side of the Circle in Clarendon Road. In no case do the rate books provide clear evidence and no builder appears to have been involved in ownership. But equally neither was Owen listed as an owner and this is to be expected in at least some of the properties. The houses on Pelham, Yarborough and Worsley Roads and at the Circle are certainly of an appropriate scale to be by Owen, something that the cramped and unremarkable Albany Road houses are not, but the totally straight and unimaginative roads of the former area in no way suggest the master's touch. On the other hand Albany Road is curved in the best Owen tradi-

Fig. 7 The Number of Houses by and probably by Owen, 1834–63
Source: *Rate Returns*

tion, but the workaday, semi-detached houses could, one hopes, never seriously be mistaken for the creation of the man who fashioned the impressive villas of Kent Road, Queen's Crescent and Grove Road. The houses at the Circle represent something of a problem for their aspect is determined by the curve of the Circle itself, they are sizeable and attractive and they fringe a known Owen domain. On the other hand they are for the most part semi-detached, they lack spacious grounds, such an essential prerequisite of Owen's thinking, and architecturally they are quite unlike anything Owen built elsewhere. Moreover, it is difficult to believe that he would have adopted a policy of building for sale specifically in respect of houses in this area when he was simultaneously pursuing his well tried strategy of building and renting at Eastern Parade. On these grounds it is submitted that association with Owen must be rejected.

Owen: Builder and Landlord

Having established the probable extent of Owen's house building operations, represented by the 106 villas and 54 terraced houses referred to above, it now becomes possible to trace the progress of this aspect of his business. His first constructions, Cambrian Cottage and Tremayne Cottage, both finished in 1834, were modest affairs, as their rateable values testify; the former was rated at £12 and the latter at £6. Grove House (£45) followed in 1835, but 1836 saw only the tiny St. Ann's (£12) ready for occupation. However, in these buildings, together with Swiss Cottage (£22), completed in 1837, Owen was merely testing his financial and architectural strength for he made his first great impact with eight houses in Queen's Terrace, collectively rated at £198, in the same year. Subsequent construction of the terrace was somewhat spasmodic, as Table 1 indicates, for it was not until late 1840 that it was finally completed, bringing to an end the first phase of his work, as may be seen from the graph of houses completed (Figure 7). After a lull in 1841 Owen embarked upon his most productive period, ushered in by Sussex Place (£219), finished in 1842, followed in 1843 by six houses varying in size from St. Vincent Lodge (£69) to the relatively humble Errol Cottage (£16 10*s*.), producing a combined rateable value of £245 for properties completed that year. These combined values for each year, graphed in Figure 8, provide a better index of building activity than the number of houses completed since they are measures of the size of the houses involved. Thus the six houses finished in 1843 represented a greater level of activity than the eight houses of Queen's Terrace in 1837. 1844 saw the construction of nine villas, all in the Kent Road and Grove Road areas, collectively rated at £321. Increasing his output still further, Owen added eleven properties to his tally in 1845, retaining his penchant for diversity in size with the Fernery, valued at £18, on the one hand, and Holmbush at £54 on the other. The combined rateable value of £426 for 1845 was subsequently surpassed in 1846, largely due to the completion of Portland Terrace (£600), which accounted for the greater part of the total of £639 for that year. As both Figures 7 and 8 indicate, this was the apogee of his endeavours, for although he put up 13 houses giving a combined rateable value of £522 in 1847, he never again built so many houses of such a collective size as he did in 1846. Many would argue that since 1846 included Portland Terrace, the year was also his finest architectural contribution to Southsea; even Pevsner and Lloyd, who see little to admire in Southsea, allow themselves a laudatory mention of the building.[11]

Perhaps sated, or even financially embarrassed by the increasing pace of his activities since 1842, Owen entered a brief period of retrenchment in 1848–49, more especially in the latter year when the four houses he built were valued only at £125, not substantially more than his own Dovercourt, rated at £99 when it was finished the previous year. He still clung to his policy of slipping in small houses, such as Thicket Cottage (£10 10*s*.), amid his more generous creations, although it must be admitted that the size of houses is sometimes dictated by the dimensions of the land available. 1850 was not only a relatively prolific year, eleven houses being finished, but one in which their combined rateable value, £420, very nearly equalled that of 1845, one of Owen's peak years. This flurry of construction struck a discordant note, however, for it was not only out

Fig. 8 Rateable Values at Completion of Houses by and probably by Owen, 1834–63
Source: *Rate Returns*

of character with the events of 1848 and 1849, but also with the level of his building programme for the remainder of the decade. The construction of nine houses in 1851 should not obscure the modest combined rateable value of £269. The latter value was exceeded only once in the subsequent years of the decade, in 1853, when five properties including Portland Lodge (£85), Flint Lodge (£60) and Vale End (£55), gave rise to a rateable value of £287. As Figure 8 shows, in other years of the 1850s Owen's output only once, in 1858, and then by the shortest of margins, attained the £200 mark, and in 1856 The Retreat valued at £21 was his solitary contribution. One suspects that it was not in his nature to remain quiescent for long and as though to deny the charge of failing dynamism with increasing age, Owen, exhibiting renewed vigour, put up six houses valued at £331 in Eastern Parade in 1860, and a further five worth £348, also on Eastern Parade, were completed in 1863 after his death. Having begun his work in the environs of Grove Road and Kent Road, he had advanced along Clarendon Road in 1851–52 reaching Eastern Villas Road in 1853, and from 1858 he concentrated his efforts on houses within a few yards of the sea which had played such a large part in the growth of Southsea in the first instance.

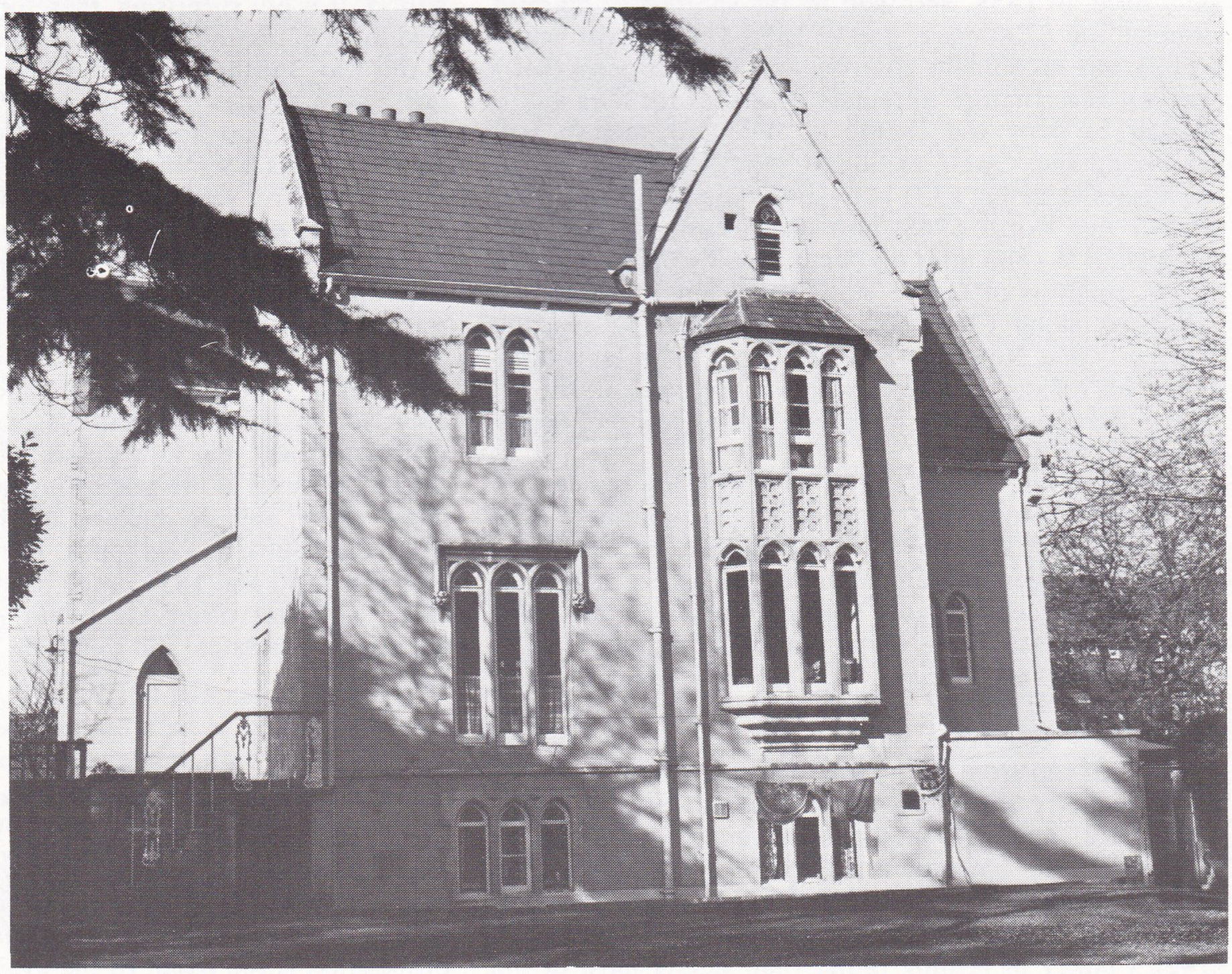
The foregoing remarks refer to Owen the builder; by virtue of the information available in the rate books as to ownership it is also possible to comment on Owen the landlord. The generalised pattern of this aspect of his business may be seen in Figure 9 which is based on the rating officer's estimate of the rental that could be theoretically derived from each house. This gross estimated rental (GER), as it is termed, is used in preference to rateable values since it gives a better indication of the income Owen received from his houses. In establishing the GER for a property the assessors took some account of the actual rent, but as Daunton observes, it was a rule of thumb exercise; however it may be regarded as a helpful guide to landlords' income.[12] The graph shows an exponential rise in the GER down to 1847, symptomatic of Owen's policy of renting rather than selling most of the houses he built. The reduction of the rental in 1848 was the result of the sale of a number of houses in Grove Road and of Sussex Place, the latter to a fellow property owner Edwin Jones who himself lived in Swiss Cottage, built by Owen. Figure 8 emphasises the considerable financial burden Owen must have carried at this time, for the GER of his houses tripled between 1843 and 1847, implying that his capital expenditure must have been very much greater than the income he could derive from rents in such a short period. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have sold some of his houses to realise the investment locked up in this way. Further evidence of cash flow problems in the late 1840s springs from his departure in 1850 from the policy of retaining houses for rent to one of sale on completion. It was a significant move for 1850 was his fourth most productive year during which he build eleven houses, and all but one, St. Lawrence, were sold to their first occupiers, enabling Owen to recoup building and land costs and to secure an immediate risk profit. Since the ploy was not repeated, at least not to the same degree, it may be assumed that the crisis had been overcome. Nevertheless henceforth Owen adopted a much more conservative approach to ownership and was careful to sell off older properties each year to maintain a GER marginally above the £4,000 level as the graph illustrates. In this way he was more easily able to finance his building commitments without recourse to loan funds. The sharp rise in the GER between 1850 and 1851 noted on the graph is not at variance with this observation, but represents a universal increase in the rates, and therefore in theoretical rents, in the borough.

Owen's Southsea: some population characteristics

To identify Owen's houses, since they were among the largest in Southsea, is also to isolate middle-class families, who are arguably worthy of as much attention as the houses in which they lived. That such a study is a feasible proposition is the result of the availability of the original

Swiss Cottage, 1837, Kent Road. Photo: Roger Homer

Summerlands, 1859, Villiers Road. Photo: Roger Homer



Sussex Terrace, constructed 1854–5. Photo: Roger Homer

Queens Terrace, the Kent Road wing, 1840. Photo: Roger Homer

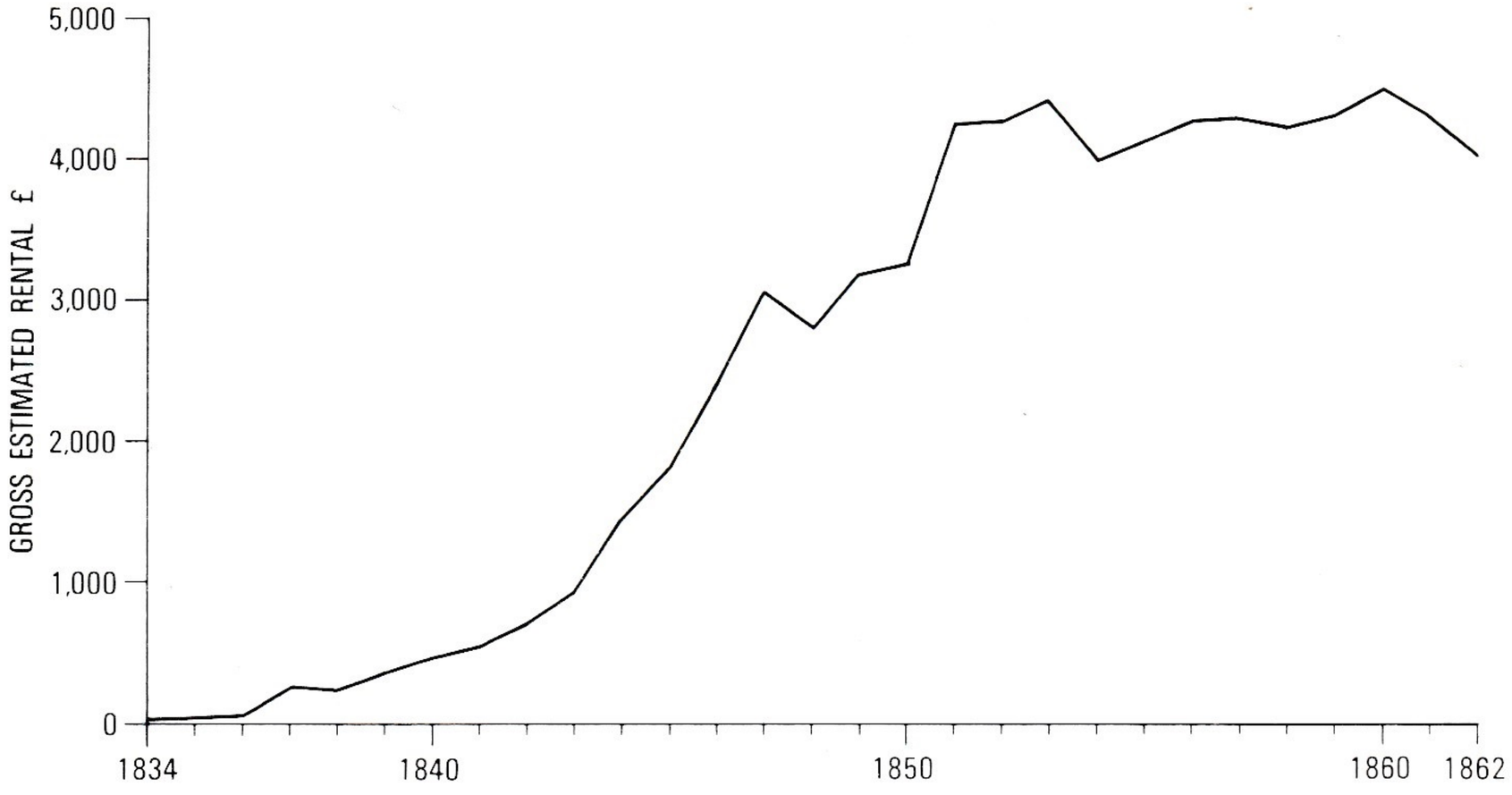


Fig. 9 Annual Gross Estimated Rental of Houses owned by Owen, 1834–62
Source: *Rate Returns*

documents completed by the census enumerators, providing a wealth of information about the inhabitants of each house and allowing a reconstruction of the social characteristics of affluent Southsea at mid-century.[13] It is perfectly possible to use Owen's houses as the basis for an analysis of the middle classes, but since the larger the sample the more statistically significant the results, it is preferable to use a larger number of houses. This may be achieved by adding similar sized houses in the vicinity of those by Owen to the houses previously studied. The sample then comprises 118 houses in 1851 and 206 in 1861; the resulting area is termed 'Owen's Southsea'.

The small number of houses existing in 'Owen's Southsea' at the time of the 1841 census precludes the identification of significant trends, but the pace of building construction in the following two decades was such that the total population of the houses sampled rose from 704 in 1851 to 1,234 in 1861. These numbers are sufficiently large to justify the formulation of generalisations about an early Victorian middle-class urban area.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the population in both censal years was the remarkable imbalance between males and females. Females accounted for 71 per cent of the total in 1851 and 72 per cent a decade later, the similarity suggesting an absence of dynamic social change in this respect. There were two principal reasons for this situation, the first being of greater import than the second. The widespread employment of resident servants, the great majority of whom were young women, was an essential ingredient of middle-class family life, which could hardly have been properly executed without the often lavish provision of assistance from the lower orders. No less than precisely one-third of the 1861 population comprised female servants, well over two-thirds of whom were between the age of 16 and 30. In the 21 to 30 age group, for instance, female servants were almost twice as numerous as the remainder of the population, and in the 11 to 20 group they very nearly equalled it. Male servants existed, but since they were restricted to tasks such as page, footman or coachman, and since in any case Lord North's 1777 tax on male servants still obtained (it was not repealed until 1937),[14] they were in limited demand and could muster less than 3 per cent of the population.

The second cause of the dichotomy was simply that women outnumbered men within the families themselves, some 62 per cent of the non-servant population in 1861 comprising females. There is no evidence to suggest that substantially more girls than boys were being, or had been born (indeed the number of male and female children aged 10 and below in the sampled houses was identical in both 1851 and 1861), and since the Napoleonic period there had been no major war that might have contributed to a surplus of females. Rather the answer lies in the custom for well bred daughters to remain at home until marriage; the restrictions imposed by such a situation caused a surprising number of them never to marry at all. Inevitably the 21 to 30 and the 31 to 40 age groups for females who were not servants were numerically important, especially in 1851 when, as Tables 2 and 2a indicate, the 21 to 30 age group alone accounted for more than one-quarter of such women. In 1861 these age groups, although important, were somewhat overshadowed by the considerable upsurge in the child population, itself indicative of the

Table 2

Population exclusive of servants, by age, 1851

Age	Males		Females	
	no.	%	no	%
⩽ 10	42	24.4	42	15.4
11–20	21	12.2	38	13.9
21–30	21	12.2	73	26.7
31–40	12	7.1	44	16.1
41–50	26	15.1	35	12.8
51–60	25	14.5	22	8.0
61–70	17	9.9	10	3.7
> 70	8	4.6	9	3.3
	172		273	

Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1851 Census*

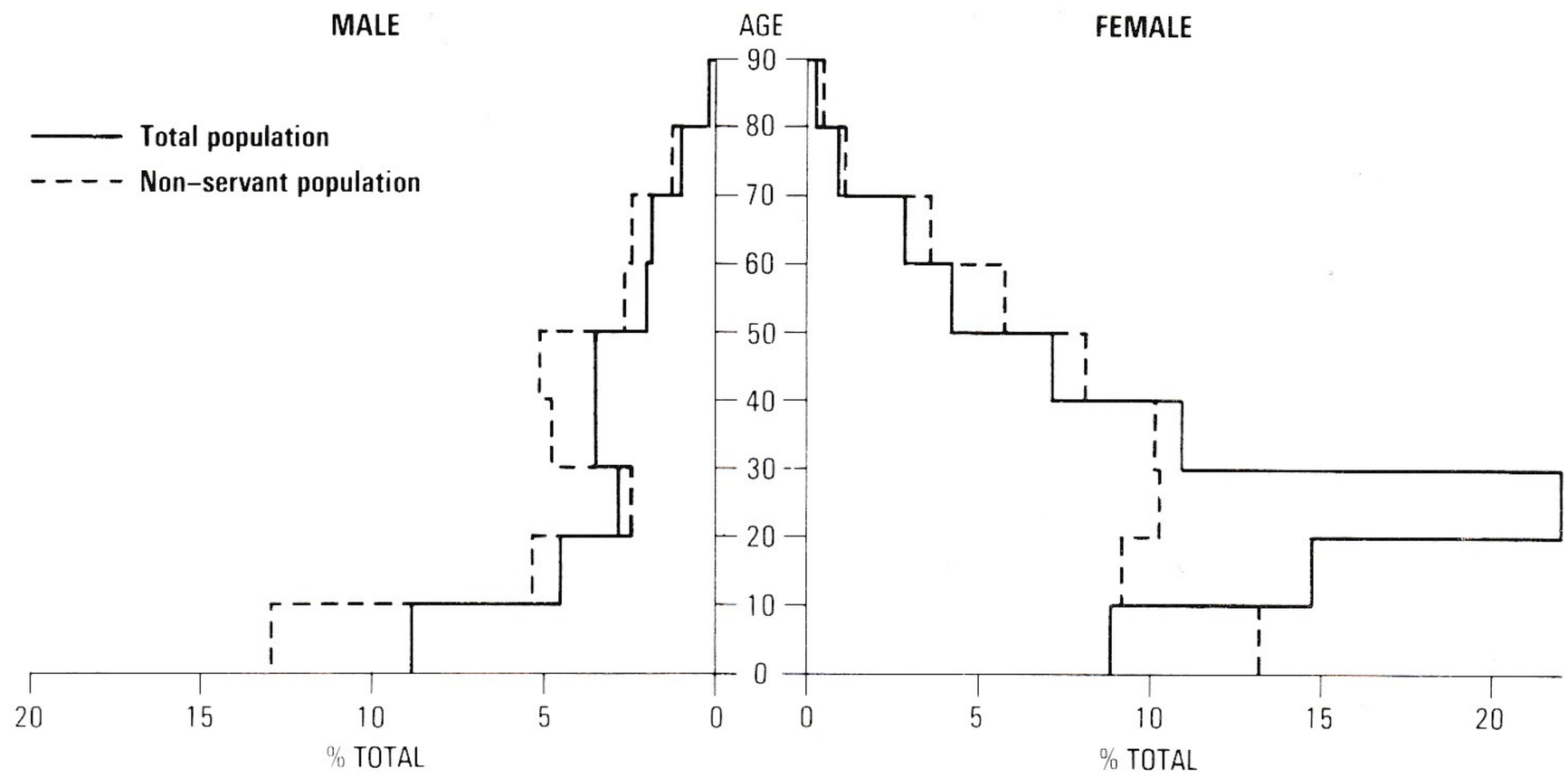


Fig. 10 Population Pyramid for Owen's Southsea, 1861
Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1861 Census*

Table 2a

Population exclusive of servants, by age, 1861

Age	Males no.	%	Females no.	%
⩽ 10	107	34.4	110	21.4
11–20	44	14.1	77	15.0
21–30	22	7.1	84	16.3
31–40	40	12.9	83	16.1
41–50	42	13.5	67	13.0
51–60	22	7.1	48	9.3
61–70	21	7.0	31	6.0
> 70	13	4.2	14	2.7
	311		514	

Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1861 Census*

changing nature of the families in the sampled houses. It seems likely that in 1851 fewer young families than in 1861 could afford to live in these relatively large properties, but that in the intervening decade mid-century affluence provided more youthful parents with this enviable opportunity.

The census returns provide many instances of households containing ageing unmarried daughters, but the most notable is the family headed by Mr. H. W. Ross, a 78-year-old fundholder who lived at 5 Portland Terrace in 1861. He had four daughters aged 41, 39, 26 and 22 to brighten his home, and as though this formidable array of femininity were not enough, he could call upon the services of four female servants in addition to his wife. Next door but one lived Vice-Admiral Henry D. Chadds together with three daughters aged 40, 38 and 33. At Vale End resided one of the more socially remarkable households since its head, Joseph Pinhorn, was a retired storekeeper from the Royal Clarence Yard; he was nevertheless able to support three daughters aged 38, 36 and 34, his wife and two servants. Perhaps 'storekeeper' had a different connotation in mid-nineteenth century. These examples are by no means isolated for there were in total some nine families in 1851 and 1861 with three daughters above the age of 20. Certainly the practice of female children remaining at home while the males left for education and employment is reflected in Table 2. From a position of numerical equality in the youngest age group, males are outnumbered by females by a factor of four in the 21–30 age group. The imbalance is subsequently slightly reduced through marriage which increases the number of males in the houses investigated, but as the population pyramid shown in Figure 10 poignantly illustrates, the sample represents a community unquestionably dominated by women. Although the curves converge in the upper age ranges, it is not until the 71–80 group do the sexes achieve parity. The well known longevity of women ensures that there is only one male above the age of 80, the 82-year-old retired Army surgeon Colin Young of Rosina Cottage, compared with three females, the oldest of whom, Mrs. Mary Mottley a fundholder living at Cams, Grove Road, had achieved the grand old age of 88. The inclusion of servants causes the pyramid for the total population to exhibit an even more pronounced asymmetry; it may only be conjectured whether contemporary residents were as aware of the imbalance between the genders as the statistics indicate existed. There can hardly be many, if any, urban areas at present in Western Europe in which the number of female children is far less than the number of older women up to the age of 30, yet this sample would suggest that this situation must have been universal in middle class areas in early Victorian England.

Occupations of the heads of the sampled households unquestionably support the hypothesis that Owen's Southsea was a satellite of the dockyard, the navy and the army which defended Portsea Island. In both 1851 and 1861 naval and military officers, both active and retired, accounted for very nearly half the heads of households, and some areas, above all Queen's Crescent, were nothing short of military and naval enclaves. Thus in 1851 Major General George Jones occupied Woodside, Major General William Riddall resided at Queenstown Lodge, adjacent was Rear Admiral John Hollinsworth in Toobimba Lodge, while Captain Thomas Yeats RN lived in Woodend. It would not be surprising if Lt. Thomas Hodg-

Table 3

Occupation of Heads of Households in Owen's Southsea, 1851 and 1861

	1851		1861	
	no.	%	no.	%
Naval and Army Officers	54	47	85	44
Property owners, fund-holders, annuitants	28	24	36	19
Professional services	18	16	32	16
Manufacturers, merchants	9	8	25	13
Other services	6	5	15	8
	115		193	

Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1851 and 1861 Census*

kinson was a trifle overawed by this panoply of rank opposite his house St. Lawrence. Predictably, active naval officers were in a clear majority, but the number of Royal Marine and Royal Marine Artillery officers was more than expected. Of the 54 officers living in the area in 1851, some 23 were in the Navy, nine were in the Marines and only seven were serving Army officers. There was one more retired Army officer than were on active duty, and even more surprisingly, retired military gentlemen also outnumbered retired naval officers, again by one. Obviously the delights of maritime Southsea were at least as powerful an attraction as proximity to land-locked drill squares elsewhere in the country.

The second most important occupation, the province of those living on what is often called unearned income, could claim between one-quarter and one-fifth of the sampled household heads, a telling commentary on the enormous wealth that Britain's industrial system had generated, on the contemporary taxation laws and on the gulf that existed between the middle and working classes at this time. The great majority of those who were living off investment were women: some 18 out of 28 in 1851 and 30 out of 36 in 1861. The phenomenon was not restricted to Southsea; Hobsbawm remarks that 'of the shareholders in the Bank of Scotland and the Commercial Bank of Scotland in the 1870s about two-fifths were women, and of these in turn two-thirds were single'.[15] The Southsea data could imply that more women than men constituted the idle rich, and in a sense this was true, but it has to be said that women lacked the opportunities enjoyed by men of finding employment. Middle class men, most of whom possessed an investment income, on the other hand, normally had a profession and were so described by the census enumerators; they might have been rich, but they were less likely to have been idle.

Using the number of servants employed as a surrogate for income, there is considerable evidence that many of the independent ladies were outstandingly well provided for. Several boasted two or three servants but the 1851 census records Margaret Hall living in Queen's Terrace supported by four servants including a butler, Amelia Otter residing at Eastlands with a similar retinue, and even more ostentatiously, Lady Lennox inhabiting Portland Terrace with no less than five servants at her disposal. Not even Lady Harriet Blackwood of Nelson Villa nor The Honorable Maria Byng and her daughter The Honorable Beatrice Byng, a maid of honour to the Queen, of Queen's Terrace, could justify more than four servants in 1861. Lady Lennox, however, was able to do so and still employed five.

The six male heads of households in the independent occupation group in 1861 were either retired or property owners like Alderman William Humby (Mayor 1862) of Kensington House, Elm Grove, and Edwin Jones of Swiss Cottage. Investment in property was a very common and relatively lucrative source of income in the nineteenth century, and there were a number of men like Edward Fawkes, a retired army officer of Summerlands in Villiers Road, and Richard Marvin, auctioneer and estate agent of Grove Lodge who owned properties in the area. Owen himself is undoubtedly the best example of a local property owner, but he was not enumerated as such.

Of the professional occupational group the clergy were the most numerous in 1851, accounting for five of the 18 heads. They included the Revd George Livesay of Errol Cottage, Elm Grove who was chaplain to the convict hulks in Portsmouth harbour, and the Revd John Barton, curate of St. George's Portsea, who could afford to live in the second largest house in Grove Road, The Hermitage, by dint of using it as a small school for ten boarders. Considering that in addition to the schoolboys and the Revd Barton himself, there were 12 other people residing at The Hermitage, one may wonder at the nature of the accommodation provided for the boys. This not uncommon Victorian practice of clergymen doubling up as schoolmasters may also be witnessed in 1861 at St. Mary's Hall, Queen's Crescent. Here the Revd Thomas Knight, incumbent of St. Mary's, ran a school of 18 boarders assisted by one master and seven servants. The Revd Thomas Brownrigg, incumbent of St. Jude's, who had married one of Owen's daughters, Louisa, resided at the Parsonage, Grove Road, and the Revd Frederick Hadley, curate of St. Jude's, lived in another of Owen's houses, Tintern Lodge at the eastern end of Clarendon Road.

By 1861 the increasing formalisation of administration in the Dockyard caused the number of civil servants to equal the number of clergy; with one exception, and that because of the inadequate description of his work, all the civil servants were employed as clerks, accountants, storekeepers and overseers of works by the War Office or Admiralty. That they could afford to live in the area indicates that their contemporary status in society was more exalted than their job descriptions would allow at the present time. The remaining professional occupations comprised a small number of solicitors, bankers, a single architect – the incumbent of Dovercourt, Thomas Ellis Owen – and surprisingly a dearth of doctors unconnected with the armed services. In 1851 all the medical men were either retired or naval surgeons, and a decade later of the three civilian practitioners, two were Inspector Generals for Hospitals; only Dr. Henry Norman of Portland Lodge seems to have been a general practitioner. One would have thought that an area of such obvious opulence would have attracted more than a single doctor. Certainly, if Dr. Norman's five servants and large house are anything to go by, the rewards accruing to the profession were not small.

Manufacturing in Portsmouth outside the Dockyard was weakly developed[16] with the consequence that there were few industrialists in the borough, and even fewer who were of sufficient substance to reside in Owen's Southsea. An exception was the building trade for a growing population justified the construction of houses, and in 1851 three of the nine manufacturers were in this activity, although Owen himself might justifiably have been added to their ranks. The three concerned were Benjamin Bramble of Grove House who was heavily involved in Dockyard contracting work, William B. Davis of Buckingham Villas, Villiers Road, and George Absalom of Clarendon Villas, Palmerston Road, described as employing 60 men. Of the others two were engineers and a further two were organ builders, whose presence in Owen's Portland Terrace was doubtless occasioned by the simultaneous construction of St. Jude's church by the architect from his own resources. The principal change between 1851 and 1861 was the increase in the number of merchants from one to ten. It was not only their emergence but also their apparent lifestyle which was interesting. They seemed to be the new commercial élite representing a brash arrogance in contrast to the more traditional values of professional men. George Baker of Elm Lodge doubled as the Russian vice-consul, Charles Grant, an Irish commission agent, could at the age of 28 afford to live at Woodend in Queen's Crescent, and John McCheane JP could justify four servants at Queen's Place from his income as commission merchant for Irish produce. William Atterbury was blandly described as a commercial traveller yet he was able to live at Lymington Lodge in Clarendon Road. Even John Watson, an agent for Paris kid gloves, did well enough to afford residence at Airedale House, Elm Grove.

Other manufacturing occupations in 1861 very much reflected the pattern of the time for Portsmouth as a whole, emphasising the importance of the clothing trades, brewing and construction. William Dummer, a woollen draper and tailor, lived modestly with one servant at The Villa, Elm Grove, although by contrast another woollen draper, Barnets Joseph, lived in some style at Warleigh House, Grove Road. One of the foremost naval outfitters in the borough, Henry Matthews, resided to the south at Spring Lawn. The manufacture of corsets, which was later to become the most important factory industry in Portsmouth, was represented by William Helby at St. Margarets in Yarborough Road. Helby was one of the pioneers of the mass production of corsets, or stays as they were known, and with his wife and son operated one of the earliest factories in the industry in Kent Street, Portsea. Two of Portsmouth's many brewers lived in the area; Joseph Lush, who ran St. George's Brewery in St. George's Square employing 13 men and two boys, lived in Queen's Place with his wife, seven children and four servants. Henry Bransbury, who owned the Hyde Park Brewery in Hyde Park Road, lived at Elgin House, Wish Lane. Charles Morey of Buckingham Villas was one of the area's two builders. The other was Henry Francis Gauntlett, still a relatively young man at 38, who as we have seen, was almost certainly the architect and builder of a number of terraces hitherto attributed to Owen; he dwelt at Kinburn Villa in Villiers Road.

The final occupation group, services, largely comprised lodging house keepers and schoolmistresses who were able to make good use of the large houses available in a solidly respectable district. In keeping with this respectability, the lodging houses seem to have provided a pied à terre for ladies of independent means, thereby adding to the distinctive flavour of the social mix. Using the 1861 census, there were two good examples: Elm Grove House where Miss Ann Fleetwood, a 'ladies boarding house keeper' ministered to two naval officers' widows, a mortgagee and a landed proprietor, and Kent House, home of Miss Elizabeth Ubsdell, whose three boarders were all widowed or unmarried fundholders. Judging by the presence of only two or three boarders, two of the schools were small, or unsuccessful, even though the accommodation was by no means modest. One such establishment was Woodside, noted as General Jones's home in 1851. On the other hand three were much larger and suggested a more typical size of the small scale early Victorian boarding school. The smallest was run by Miss Maria Moore at The Hermitage; the ten scholars, whose ages ranged from ten to 17, were

Table 4

The Social structure of Melton Mowbray (1851) and Owen's Southsea (1861)

Class	Melton Mowbray % population	Owen's Southsea % population
1	4.5	61.5
2	16.8	24.6
3	14.5	11.3
4	24.6	2.0
5	29.6	0.5

Source: Royle, *op. cit.,* Enumerators' Returns, *1861 Census*

taught by Miss Moore, one other schoolmistress and two 21-year-old lady teachers of music and English. The Eastman RN Establishment, housed in one of the largest of Owen's houses at the southern end of Eastern Villas Road, was owned by Mrs. Sarah Eastman, gave tuition to 17 pupils and had three schoolmasters in residence. Of the remainder in the service category it is worth mentioning David Cunliffe at Staunton Villa in The Thicket; he was a 'portrait and battle painter', an activity which is entirely in keeping with the probable interests and affluence of the community.

Since the sample almost entirely comprises large houses, it is to be expected that their inhabitants should be relatively wealthy. The occupations of the heads of households, together with the rateable values, certainly do not suggest poverty, but to ascertain the true extent of local affluence a comparison is required with other areas in Britain. Data assembled by Phillips and Walton allow such an exercise.[17] They relate the urban population to the sum paid during 1847–48 by that population in assessed taxes. The latter were levied on what was considered to be attributes of the wealthy; these included windows, which accounted for 45.4 per cent of the total assessed taxes, carriages (15.2 per cent), riding horses (11.3 per cent), game duties (9.7 per cent), men servants (7.0 per cent) and dogs (5.5 per cent). The 49,214 people in Portsmouth paid £18,059 in assessed taxation, that is, £0.37 per head. This was the fifth highest in England after Bath (£0.59), Cheltenham (£0.57), Brighton (£0.55) and London (£0.42), and the concentration of the wealthy in Southsea must have helped very substantially to produce such a favourable result. Notwithstanding, the inclusion of Portsea and Landport must have depressed the figures. An alternative approach is to compare the social stratification of household heads in the sample with that elsewhere employing a scheme devised by Royle.[18] The value of his method is that individuals may be stratified with some reference to their life-style rather than to their occupation alone. Five classes are derived; the first contains those heads whose households contained at least one servant per household member or heads of professional occupation whose households contained at least one servant for every three household members, while at the other extreme the fifth class contains heads of unskilled manual occupation. Royle presents data for Melton Mowbray, a town noted for its fox-hunting season which attracted wealthy sportsmen, yet there was nevertheless a striking difference between these figures and those for Owen's Southsea, as Table 4 indicates. Admittedly Melton Mowbray is a single case, but it is likely to be much closer to the national situation than Owen's Southsea, where almost two-thirds of household heads are placed in the highest social category.

However wealthy householders were, this did nothing to conflict with the Victorian practice of renting rather than owning properties; rather more than 90 per cent of occupiers rented their dwellings, with no security of tenure. The poor were unable to accumulate sufficient capital for house purchase and used the system to move within towns to houses in keeping with the fluctuations in their income. As a consequence there was very considerable intra-urban mobility among the lower orders, but this also applied to the higher social groups despite their ability to buy the houses in which they lived. The process was exacerbated in Southsea owing to its very nature as a place of residence for officers of the armed forces. A study of the residents of Queen's Terrace from its completion in 1840 to 1862, based on information provided by the rate books, shows that the average length of stay was 5.5 years; the figure for Portland Terrace between 1846 and 1862 was only 3.9 years. That these averages were this high was very largely a result of the presence of a few retired people and widows who had obviously decided that their stage in the life cycle, coupled with the tenancy of an Owen property, albeit rented, simply did not justify a move. This finding is very much in line with investigations into residential mobility in other towns. Pooley, for instance, working on the period 1851 to 1861 in Liverpool, found that households with heads in the over-50 age group were much more likely to persist in the same residence than those with younger heads.[19] Thus Mrs. Margaret Hall, a widow and annuitant, lived in Queen's Terrace for the whole of the period studied, while Admiral Byng, and after his death, his widow, lived there for 22 years; another long-term resident was Mrs. Emily Williams, a surgeon's widow who spent 17 years in the terrace. Portland Terrace did not

seem to exercise quite the same attraction, as is reflected in the lower mean length of stay, but General Cardew and Admiral Chadds were in residence for 15 and 9 years respectively. It follows that the tenancy of some of the houses changed very frequently indeed; the most extreme cases were 3 Queen's Terrace which housed eight different families in the 23-year period, and 11 Portland Terrace which suffered seven tenants in 16 years. One may only guess at the business that came the way of the furniture removal firms.

The early Victorian penchant for moving house, together with the frequency of service postings, the growth of the Dockyard and the attractiveness of Southsea, ensured that a good number of the adult residents, as opposed to servants, were born outside Portsmouth. In fact these influences were so powerful that in 1851 Owen's Southsea possessed the rare attribute of housing more adults born in another county than in the locality. Some 20 per cent were born in London and Middlesex as against 17 per cent in Portsmouth, Portsea and Southsea combined. Admittedly the area was strong in naval and military families whose mobility was much in excess of that of the population as a whole, but such a situation is more characteristic of a gold rush or early textile mill settlement than of a suburb of a substantial borough of 72,096 souls. More typical was Liverpool where 24 per cent of the household heads were born in the borough and 17 per cent hailed from the surrounding counties of Lancashire and Cheshire.[20] In the Southsea sample even the county of Hampshire contributed only 7 per cent and Sussex a mere 5 per cent. The cosmopolitan nature of the place was emphasised by the relatively large number of adults (9 per cent) who were born abroad, most being born to families of serving officers on foreign tours of duty. It is quite remarkable how these service connections were kept up; almost without exception those born in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, the West and East Indies had either entered the Navy or Army or had married officers. General Jones, Mrs. Chadds, the wife of Admiral Chadds and Mrs. Maitland, mother of Major Maitland of Portland Terrace, were all born in the West Indies; the Honorable Mrs. Admiral Byng, Captain Mainwaring RN of Clarence Villas, Captain Wallis RN of Holmbush, Captain Lawlor of Sussex Place and the wives of both Captain Henderson, Crescent House and Captain Carmaechal, Tremanton, were born in Eastern Canada.

Owen's Southsea: The Servant Population

The sheer numerical importance of the servant population, which comprised 37 per cent of the total population in Owen's Southsea in 1851, combined with the fact that residential servants represent an aspect of family life which has now effectively disappeared, justify their singling out for particular attention.

Table 5

Age of servants, 1851

Age	Females no.	%	Males no.	%
≤ 16	14	6	5	14
17–20	28	13	8	23
21–30	125	56	12	34
31–40	37	16	7	20
> 40	20	9	3	9
	224	100	35	100

Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1851 Census*

The present day stereotype of the Victorian servant, stemming from the works of Dickens, Galsworthy, Thackeray and others, is a girl in her early twenties, unmarried and hailing from a sleepy village where her father and brothers labour in the fields. The census returns for Southsea provide no information on life in such settlements, but they certainly confirm some other preconceived notions. The 1851 returns for Owen's Southsea indicate that 87 per cent of the servants were indeed female, that slightly more than half of these were aged between 21 and 30 (Table 5) and that they were almost all single, only 4 per cent being recorded as married. Since servants lived in, employers were most reluctant to provide accommodation for dependants, and it was this that ruled out women with children, be they married or widows. Childless widows were acceptable and some 3 per cent of the female servants fell into this category. As for the origins of the servant body, there is a plethora of evidence, analysed below, to support the contention of migration from rural areas; villages such as Titchfield, Swanmore, Hambledon, Brockenhurst, Soberton, Beaulieu, Bursledon and Catherington, all full of rustic connotation for the urban dweller, constantly recur in the prosaic census reports.

That male servants were so sparse was the result of the tax levied on them (in 1853 the rate was set at £1 1*s.* 0*d.* per annum for those above the age of 18 and at £0 10*s.* 6*d.* for boys)[21] and of the traditional view of what constituted a man's work; almost all those in the sample were butlers, footmen, coachmen and grooms, that is, posts which only the wealthiest families could afford. Further, men were

paid more than women, making them a much less attractive proposition. Even Owen himself did not rise to a coachman in 1851, although he did employ a footman and a page; however, by 1861 the page had been exchanged for a coachman. The possession of a coachman could well be used as an index of wealth, but the problem is that most coachmen did not live in their employer's premises, with the consequence that the census is by no means a reliable guide to those able to afford such a luxury. Only five coachmen were recorded in 1851. They were employed by Benjamin Bramble at Grove House, Major Maitland of Portland Terrace, Captain Henderson at Crescent House, General Jones at Woodside and Mrs. Vans at Barrington House in Kent Road. Judging from the number of stables on which rates were levied, quite apart from those houses with stables and coachhouses not separately identified by the rate books, it seems clear that the five instances referred to constitute a very considerable underestimate of the number of residents employing coachmen.

There seems to have been both a lower and an upper age limit upon the employment of servants, the former imposed by legislation and the latter the result of the decreasing efficiency of old age. In the case of both boys and girls the youngest age was 14 and one might even argue that Eliza Child, one of this age group, employed by Lt. Lang at Grove Lodge East was not inappropriately named. Indeed, the 15-year-old James Watts, also on Lt. Lang's strength, had already managed to cram an entirely different career into his short life, for he was entered as 'servant; Boy Second Class retired'. At the opposite end of the scale, the mid-50s seem to have been the age by which the great majority of female servants had left the occupation. The one example considerably at variance with this observation was provided by Elizabeth Sims, aged 74, housekeeper to the 80-year-old Revd Saunders, a 'clergyman not having the care of souls' and his wife Kitty, residing in Portland Terrace. Perhaps the tenor of life in the household allowed even a septuagenarian servant to cope. By contrast, the oldest male servant was a mere 51: Charles Penn, coachman to Benjamin Bramble, Mayor at the time of the census.

Following the convenience of finding places at proximate rather than distant locations, it is inevitable that most young servants originated locally and that thereafter there was a movement away from the area. Table 6, which is based upon birthplaces, indicates that almost three-quarters of servants aged 16 and under were born in Hampshire and Sussex, and that there was a diminution down to the 31 to 40 age band as a result of new arrivals and departures of the locally born. No doubt the high mobility of naval and military families strengthened the migratory trend since there is evidence that some servants

Table 6

Servants born in Hampshire and Sussex, by age, 1851

⩽ 16	17–20	21–30	31–40
72%	54%	59%	42%

Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1851 Census*

accompanied their employers when the latter moved. The 1851 census shows that Lt. Hodgkinson, living at St. Lawrence, employed a Devon-born woman as nurse to his three children, the eldest of whom was also born in Devon in 1847; Lt. Cook of Spencer Villa, Palmerston Road, had two servants who were both born in Dorset, as was his young son; and Major Maitland of Portland Terrace retained a nurse and a lady's maid who both hailed from Sussex, the birthplace of his elder son, aged three. In all these cases the youthfulness of the children and the coincidence of birthplace give good grounds for believing that the servants had been recruited prior to the families' arrival in Southsea.

Just as the majority of young servants were recruited from neighbouring villages, it is predictable that a good proportion of the total servant population should so originate. In both 1851 and 1861 Hampshire accounted for a very similar number of servants' birthplaces, some 47 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. Since Portsmouth is located in the south-eastern corner of the county, it is to be expected that Sussex would provide a goodly number of servants for Southsea. However, the share in each of the two years investigated was only 10 per cent, as Table 7 illustrates, probably owing to the opportunities provided by Chichester, but more importantly Brighton, whose demand for servants must have greatly exceeded that of Southsea, consequential upon its size and standing as a middle-class resort. Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, the two neighbouring counties to the west accounted for a modest share, and doubtless the very isolation of the Isle of Wight caused the county's contribution to be modest. The larger figures for Devon may well have been influenced by locally born servants moving with naval families from Devonport to Portsmouth. Within the counties of Hampshire and Sussex there is again clear evidence of the existence of a sharp decline in the number of servants' birthplaces with distance from Southsea. A line linking Southampton, Petersfield and Emsworth included 80 per cent of the birthplaces of servants born in Hampshire and Sussex who were working in Owen's Southsea in 1851, and no less than 83 per cent in 1861. The census enumerators' returns do not

Table 7

Servants' birthplaces, leading Counties, %

1851		1861	
Hampshire	47.5	Hampshire	44.3
Sussex	9.4	Sussex	10.0
Middlesex	5.1	Wiltshire	5.4
Devon	3.9	Dorset	4.6
Isle of Wight	3.1	Middlesex	3.9
Wiltshire	2.7	Devon	3.3
Norfolk	2.7	Surrey	3.3
Kent	2.3	Isle of Wight	2.6
Dorset	2.0	Kent	2.1

Source: Enumerators' Returns, *1951* and *1861 Census*

always cite the actual place of birth, offering merely the county, with the consequence that these percentages may well have been higher in reality. It is not the purpose of this paper to investigate such matters, but it does seem that servants' birthplace data would provide a valuable guideline as to the sphere of influence of Victorian towns, a topic which has as yet received scant attention.

It was earlier mentioned that affluence might be measured by the presence of a coachman, but apart from the limitations described, such a method says nothing about relative wealth, especially since not every middle-class family possessed a coach. The number of servants employed is a much better index, as is the rateable value of a property, and researchers have alluded to the likelihood of a correlation between the two, but the difficulty of matching houses and rateable values has been a problem. Since this task has been carried out, for Owen's Southsea, it is perfectly possible to undertake a statistical correlation exercise, using Spearman's rank correlation technique. A value of 1 would indicate an absolute correlation, a value of 0 would show the absence of a correlation and a value of -1 would illustrate that an inverse relationship exists. The computed value was found to be $+0.6974$ which indicates a relatively close relationship between the two parameters. Further, the value is significant at the 99 per cent confidence level, that is to say, such is the number of houses (48) for which the correlation has been examined that we may be very confident that the result has not been achieved by biased data, an eventuality which obviously is more likely to occur when the number of houses investigated is small. The significance of the finding is that it is now possible to use rateable values as a surrogate for the number of servants and indeed vice versa. Doubtless this relationship is one which would be expected intuitively, residents of large houses having the necessary wherewithal to afford many retainers, but it is one thing to perceive a relationship and quite another to be able to prove it statistically.

That an absolute correlation, that is, one with a statistical value of 1, between the two sets of data does not exist is the result of individual family life-styles which may be illustrated from the census material. The property with the highest rateable value in the sample (£86) was St. Vincent Lodge in Kent Road, inhabited by Mrs. Boyd, the wife of Commander Boyd, absent at the time of the census. There were neither children nor nursemaids so that the lady of this large house was attended by a modest complement of a cook, housemaid and a lady's maid. Captain William Henderson and his wife also had no children living with them at Crescent House in Queen's Crescent, but this did not prevent them from filling their house with servants; they boasted a housekeeper, lady's maid, housemaid, kitchen maid, butler, coachman and footman, giving Crescent House the largest servant retinue in the sample despite its eighth ranking in respect of rateable value (£52). The houses in Sussex Place are not especially large, attracting relatively modest rateable values (£46), but that leased by Lt. General John Brick was graced by five servants who were concerned to attend to no less than six adults; doubtless personal service was of a high order, but it must have been executed in somewhat cramped conditions. The same problem must have afflicted the household of retired RN surgeon John Williams in Queen's Terrace, whose rateable value was a mere £27, yet which included three servants in addition to his wife and two children. The children were the reason for the presence of a nursemaid in addition to a cook and housemaid, but the comparison of this example with St. Vincent Lodge, both with three servants yet very different rateable values, clearly indicates that there can never be an absolute correlation between the two parameters.

Owen's house Dovercourt was not included in the statistical test sample since it fell into a different enumerator's walk, but it may nevertheless be used to provide a further instance of the number of servants reflecting the life-style and stage in the family life-cycle. Dovercourt was rated at £120 in 1851, yet only four servants were in residence: Susan Owen, housemaid, Elizabeth Hayes cook, Samuel Williams footman and Alfred Candy page. Since only Owen and his wife Catherine were recorded as in residence this would not represent an excessive number of servants despite the size of the property. Certainly the situation at Dovercourt suggests that Captain Henderson's policy at Crescent House was bordering on extravagance; perhaps it represented an attempt to advance his social standing by a strategy beloved of middle-class Victorians.

Conclusion

No attempt has been made to argue a particular case in this paper, rather it has been demonstrated that by careful use of documentary sources it is possible to furnish authoritative statements about the dating of houses and their attribution to important architects and to outline some of the more fundamental characteristics of middle-class society at mid-nineteenth century. Thomas Ellis Owen is central to the former contribution and it is arguable that such was his influence on the growth of Southsea that he was indirectly responsible for the very social structure of the town. The author of an article in the *Evening News* was making a more fundamental remark than he knew when he observed that Thomas Ellis Owen was 'the man who built Southsea'.[22]

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Dr Riley is Principal Lecturer in the Department of Geography, Portsmouth Polytechnic where he has taught since 1966. His doctoral research was concerned with the history of coalmining in Belgium; he has published books and articles on Belgium, Benelux and Industrial Geography. His interest in industrial history is reflected in his *The Industries of Portsmouth in the Nineteenth Century* (Portsmouth Paper No. 25), in studies of the evolution of brewing and corset-making in the city and of Henry Cort's innovations at Funtley. He firmly believes in the value of a visual approach to industrial history, manifested in his support for the new discipline of industrial archaeology. His research on the growth of Southsea (Portsmouth Paper No. 16) and on T. E. Owen's houses springs from a fascination with social conditions in the nineteenth century.

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